

22 July 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: George Carver

SUBJECT : The Director's Query Concerning
External Research

1. I understand that the DDI, which had the action on the Director's 3 July query on external research, has already sent up a memorandum on this subject. It is one, however, on which I have rather strong views and I would like to take this opportunity to express them.

2. Participation in external research activities over many years has convinced me that the foreign affairs community overall has gotten very little for its money. Useless projects, of which there are an astounding number, fall into the following categories:

a. Large-scale exercises in the social sciences, usually contracted out to organizations with heavy overhead charges. These, as Mencken said of theology, describe the unknowable in terms of the not worth knowing.

b. Standard examinations of researchable problems by organizations using government funds to hire researchers with no background in the subject who prepare their studies by using government files and interviewing government analysts, who could have done a better job in the first place and who are distracted from their own work while serving the contractor.

c. Solid research analyses of little or no relevance to policy problems because they take too much time to prepare, are written by people far removed from the policy process, and are even longer than the in-house studies policy makers don't have time to read.

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d. Excellent papers done by thorough scholars using all available classified and unclassified data which, because of the limitations of the data, add nothing to our knowledge and could have been done in-house cheaper and faster.

3. I would set against these useless activities (which proliferate because people have to dream up projects in order to comply with the requirement to spend money) others that over the years have seemed to me to give us some useful return for the XR dollar.

a. Hiring as "consultants" people of exceptional qualifications, for one reason or another not available on a full-time basis, to come in either part-time or for limited periods to participate in the regular work program. In INR this use of XR money has helped overcome budgetary rigidities and stringencies and produced papers of which one can at least say that they have been as useful as most of the rest of the Community product.

b. Projects in which the contractor develops a data base which did not exist before. These

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c. Getting outside scholars in for seminars on some topic of current interest. This helps the academic experts to feel that the government is really interested in their views and the government analysts to feel that they are in touch with important people in the outside world, both useful objectives. It can, though it does not always, serve as a mind-stretching exercise for both sides.

4. My own view has long been that External Research money would be better spent if -- paralleling some programs in the physical sciences -- much less of it were devoted to the proliferation of papers and much more to

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the training and development of foreign affairs specialists. INR has recently gone some way toward this approach. Having put out queries to a number of universities as to how they would strengthen their work on US/Soviet relations if they had more money, it has accepted proposals from Harvard and Yale. Harvard will use \$60,000 to produce a series of papers and run off a series of seminars, both of which will involve interaction between government and academic people. Yale will use its \$60,000 to help Fred Barghorn keep on with his studies on Soviet dissidents. This useful idea unfortunately is probably not one that CIA could adopt with any success.

5. As to the role of the NIO in any new external research activity in which the Agency may engage, it seems to me that it should be no different from the role of other Agency senior area and functional specialists -- the right to help shape and pass on projects but not the obligation to become entangled in the bureaucratic process.

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